

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MASERU

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 049374

FROM AF/E:POST

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP

SUBJECT: MASERU CHARGE SUCCESSION AND PEACE CORPS HISTORY

REF: MASERU 171; PRETORIA 566; NAIROBI 1253

1. REGRET INORDINATE DELAY IN RESPONDING TO REFTEL. WITH THE HORN OF AFRICA UP IN SMOKE, AF/E HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO SEE MUCH BEYOND IT.

2. WHEN I ARRIVED IN MBABANE IN AUGUST 1964, I BECAME THE FIRST FOREIGN CONSULAR REPRESENTATIVE TO BE STATIONED IN ONE OF THE HIGH COMMISSION TERRITORIES, AS THEY WERE THEN CALLED, AND ACCREDITED TO THEM ALL. SOME SIX MONTHS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE, THE DEPARTMENT FINALLY GAVE ITS APPROVAL FOR ME TO RENT A COUPLE OF ROOMS IN A BUILDING OTHERWISE INHABITED BY DIAMOND DEALERS AND POLITICAL PARTIES, THEREBY GIVING ME A MASERU HOME OTHER THAN THE LANCERS INN AND, IN EFFECT, GIVING MASERU ITS FIRST FOREIGN CONSULAR OFFICE.

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3. AS 1966 WORE ON AND INDEPENDENCE APPROACHED IN BOTH BECHUANALAND AND BASUTOLAND, THE DEPARTMENT GAVE ME MY CHOICE BETWEEN THE TWO FOR MY NEXT ASSIGNMENT. I CHOSE LESOTHO-TO-BE AND MOVED THERE IN SEPTEMBER AFTER CHRIS PAPPAS ARRIVED IN MBABANE TO REPLACE ME. WITH THE ELECTIONS OVER, I RENTED ANOTHER COUPLE OF ROOMS AND THAT

"SUITE" BECAME THE AMERICAN EMBASSY ON OCTOBER 4 WITH ME AS CHARGE. THE US EMBASSY CONSISTED OF ME AND A SECRETARY.

4. IN DECEMBER I WENT ON HOME LEAVE AND BILL HUSSEY, THEN IN LIMBO UNTIL PROBLEMS COULD BE RESOLVED TO ENABLE HIM TO OPEN OUR POST IN MAURITIUS, CAME TO SPELL ME DURING MY LEAVE. IN JANUARY I RETURNED TO FIND THAT JONATHAN HAD TAKEN SUCH A SHINE TO HUSSEY, FOR REASONS WHICH ESCAPED ME, THAT HE WAS ASKING THAT HUSSEY BE SENT AS FIRST US AMBASSADOR TO LESOTHO. THE RESPONSE FROM THE DEPARTMENT WAS THAT WE DID NOT INTEND TO APPOINT AN AMBASSADOR. (HUSSEY HAD PREVIOUSLY SERVED IN TOGO WHOSE GOVERNMENT, AFTER A BRIEF HUSSEY CHARGESHIP DURING THE AMBASSADOR'S HOME LEAVE, ASKED THE DEPARTMENT TO REPLACE THE THEN AMBASSADOR WITH HUSSEY). IN ANY EVENT, HUSSEY PROCEEDED TO MAURITIUS AS CHARGE, AFTER A COUPLE OF YEARS AT WHICH HE LEFT THE SERVICE, THE DEPARTMENT BEING LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO HIS CHARMS THAN THE GOVERNMENTS OF TOGO, LESOTHO, AND MAURITIUS (WHO, I UNDERSTAND, ALSO ASKED FOR HIM AS AMBASSADOR). HE IS NOW WORKING WITH THE SAN FRANCISCO FIRM OF CASTLE AND COOK HELPING TO PROMOTE SEVERAL OVERSEAS AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS.

5. DURING MY HOME LEAVE, I HAD DISCUSSIONS IN PEACE CORPS CONCERNING WHETHER THEY WOULD BE INTERESTED IN A PROGRAM IN LESOTHO. THEY WERE SOMEWHAT DUBIOUS THAT JONATHAN, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHO WAS LOOKED UPON AS SOMETHING OF A SOUTH AFRICAN STOOGE, WOULD BE INTERESTED BUT AUTHORIZED ME TO DISCUSS IT WITH HIM. ON MY RETURN I DID, STRESSING THAT IF HE WERE TO HAVE THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US IMPLIED BY THE EXISTENCE OF A PEACE CORPS PROGRAM, THAT WOULD GO SOME DISTANCE TOWARD UNDERCUTTING THE CHARGES BEING LEVELLED AT HIM BY HIS POLITICAL OPPONENTS, PARTICULARLY NTSU MOKHEHLE OF THE BASUTOLAND CONGRESS PARTY, OF BEING A SOUTH AFRICAN STOOGE. HE LIKED THE IDEA, PEACE CORPS SENT OUT AN OFFICER TO DISCUSS THE MODALITIES, AND IN SEPTEMBER, PEACE CORPS AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED IN WASHINGTON. WHILE SIGNING OF AGREEMENT COULD BE TAKEN AS START OF PROGRAM, BASUTO ARE RIGHT ABOUT START OF PROGRAM ON THE GROUND IN LESOTHO. I CANNOT RECALL WHETHER FEBRUARY 1968 WAS THE DATE ON WHICH THE FIRST VOLUNTEERS ARRIVED OR THE DATE THE FIRST DIRECTOR, DAVID SHERWOOD, ARRIVED AND OPENED THE OFFICE. I SUSPECT THE FORMER.

6. I LEFT MASERU IN AUGUST 1968. VANCE

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